

See, there was this city slicker who was driving around lost, and he came across this old cowboy. And so the city slicker asked the old guy how to get to the nearest town, and the——

*[At this point, the First Lady interrupted the President and provided the First Family's contribution to the entertainment for the evening.]*

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:40 p.m. at the Hilton Washington Hotel. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

### Remarks on Presenting the Preserve America Presidential Awards

May 2, 2005

**The President.** A couple of funny lines one evening and she gets carried away. *[Laughter]* Laura Leno Bush. *[Laughter]*

We welcome you to the White House. We welcome you to the Rose Garden. I hope you think it's as beautiful a place as we do, and we're honored to have some of America's outstanding community leaders and preservationists with us.

Laura is a preservationist. She's done a lot of good work here at the White House. She's helped restore the Cabinet Room. Most recently she restored the Lincoln Bedroom, based upon old photos. And you've left your marks in your communities, and she's going to leave a great mark here in Washington, DC, as well. I'm really proud of her. And we're both proud of the hard work you're doing to preserve historic resources in your communities and helping to sustain the national memory for future generations.

I appreciate Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton for joining us. Welcome, Madam Secretary. And I want to thank Fran Mainella, who is the Director of the National Parks system. Thanks for coming.

I appreciate Congressmen John Barrow of Georgia and Donna Christensen of the Virgin Islands. Welcome. Glad you both are here. Thank you for coming.

I appreciate Bruce Cole being here. He's the Chairman of the National Endowment of the Humanities. And I want to thank my

longtime friend from Texas, John Nau, who is the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Welcome. And Bobbie, good to see you, Bobbie.

Like you all, Laura and I want every American to have a chance to learn about this country's history and to enjoy our national treasures. So in 2003, we created the Preserve America Presidential Awards to recognize outstanding contributions to America's cultural and national heritage. The efforts of today's award winners have drawn tourists to museums and towns, created jobs, and revitalized neighborhoods. They've also opened new opportunities for learning.

The first Preserve America award winner we honor this year has helped extend the legacy of one of Laura's favorite authors, Edith Wharton. When we first moved to the White House, she was reading Edith Wharton's books. Sometimes it was hard to get her to turn off the light. *[Laughter]* By the way, this wasn't the first time she read Edith Wharton's books; it was the second time she read Edith Wharton's books.

And today we are proud to recognize the efforts of Edith Wharton Restoration to restore The Mount, the Massachusetts country estate of this American literary icon. Edith Wharton once said that there are two ways of spreading light, to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it. Your work reflects her light and will enrich our national heritage. Congratulations. Thank you all for coming.

The second award recipient is close to our hearts. The Texas Heritage Trails Program has mapped out special driving routes through the State to encourage regional tourism and bring some of Texas' proud history to light. Parents can take their children on a drive to learn about pioneers and cowboys. *[Laughter]* That would not be the Dallas Cowboys, although they're—*[laughter]*. And as they do so, they get to see the great diversity and beauty of the Texas landscape.

One potential visitor even expressed interest in riding the whole 650-mile Texas Independence Trail on a bicycle. That was not me. *[Laughter]* When I move back to Texas, I can't wait to see the delights of the trail again.

Congratulations, and welcome.

Our third award recipient has restored a site almost as old as America, itself. In Sainte Genevieve, Missouri, Bolduc Historic Properties has fixed up some of the State's first French Colonial homes, right on the banks of the Mississippi River. The restoration of the 18th Bolduc House has attracted visitors from around the country and has drawn rave reviews. Historical restoration is a job for—

**The First Lady.** Eighteenth century. [Laughter]

**The President.** You've become a comedian and an editor. [Laughter] We're glad you're here.

Historical restoration is a job for perfectionists, as I was saying. [Laughter] And our fourth recipient teaches us an important lesson: If something is worth doing, it is worth doing right. When the Historic Savannah Foundation and Davenport House Committee discovered that an earlier restoration on the Isaiah Davenport House Museum was historically inaccurate, they started over. Isn't that right? And you got the job done right this time.

The Davenport House inspired Savannah's unique ethic of preservation and led to the restoration of hundreds of other historic buildings. The city of Savannah has become a model for other towns to emulate. Tourists visiting historic sites contributed more than a billion dollars to Savannah's economy last year.

We welcome you here. Congratulations on doing well.

Again, Laura and I welcome you. Establishing the Presidential Awards is a small way of encouraging acts of preservation around our country. We look forward to giving the awards next year. We hope those who are listening become inspired by the examples of our recipients. Again, we congratulate our recipients and thank you for a job well done. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John L. Nau III, Chairman, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and his wife, Barbara "Bobbie" E. Nau. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

## Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Canton, Mississippi

May 3, 2005

**The President.** Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thank you very much for the warm welcome. My first observation is, is that I overdressed. [Laughter] And my second observation is, what an amazing facility you have here. I mean, you're coming in on the highway, and all of a sudden the Nissan plant starts to—shows up, and it lasts for a long time. So thanks for having me.

I want to congratulate the dreamers and doers who had this plant here, and I want to thank the workers for making it work. You can have a—you know what I know, you can have a pretty building, but if you don't have a motivated, highly skilled workforce, nothing is coming out. And I want to thank you all for showing the world that America can compete with anybody.

I want to thank the folks who greeted me, Dan Gaudette and Jim Morton, Greg Daniels, Dave Boyer—thank you all for your hospitality. Thanks for letting us come. I particularly want to thank you all for taking time out of your busy work schedules. Hope it wasn't an inconvenience to get you off the line. [Laughter] I know you want me to be short, so you can get back to work. [Laughter] No—okay, I won't be.

I've got something I want to talk about, and I'm going to spend a little time on Social Security. This is an incredibly important subject for a lot of folks. So this is going to be an educational experience, and I've asked some of our fellow citizens to join me up here, to make it clear to you all why I'm talking about this issue to begin with.

Before I do, there's some people I want to recognize, starting with the great Governor of the State of Mississippi, Haley Barbour. Welcome, Governor. Thank you. And his wife, Marsha, the first lady. Haley married well, and so did I. I don't know about you, Haley, but my wife has become quite a one-liner, and she can deliver those one-liners. I called her Laura Leno Bush the other day. I love her dearly. She is a fabulous woman. She is a—and a great First Lady. I'm sorry she's not with me here today.